



**Women  
Presidents  
Organization**

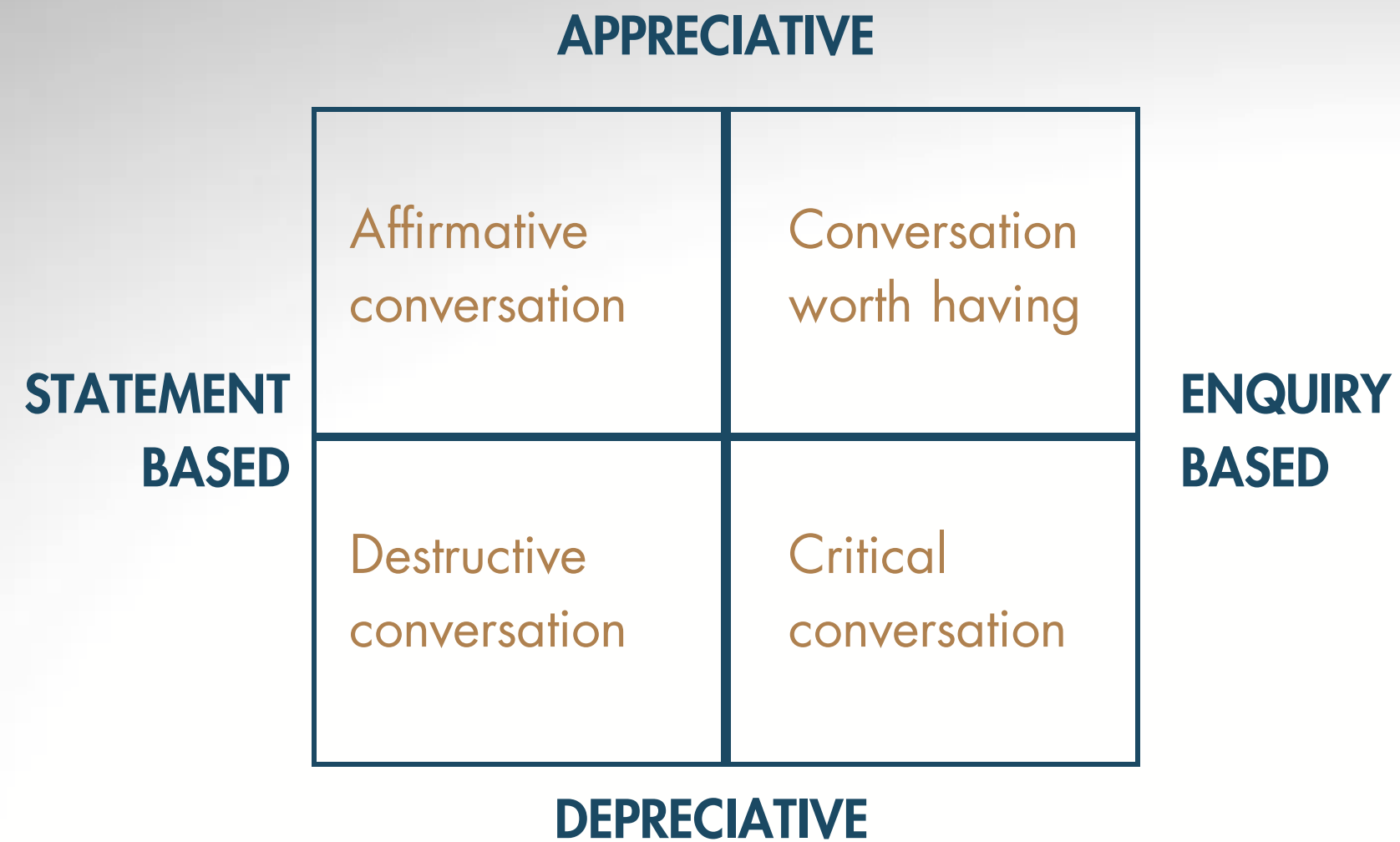
# **NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS**

**JUNE 2024**



## APPRECIATIVE ENQUIRY

Problem solving strategy.  
The way we ask questions.



## UNDERSTAND THE BEHAVIOUR OR SITUATION YOU WANT TO CHANGE. BE SUCCINCT.

### EXAMPLE

"During the last meeting, you interrupted Misha three times. She was talking about her challenge, and you cut her off to tell a story. I directed the conversation back to Misha quickly and a few minutes later you interrupted her again with loud side comment to Sally. Sally gave me a look of embarrassment and tried to get us back on track and apologised to the group and you put your hand up to "shush Sally".



## YOUR EMOTIONS ABOUT THE ISSUE.

SHARING WHAT EMOTION THEY EVOKE IN YOU IS INTIMATE AND DISARMING.

### EXAMPLE

"I am concerned about the group, and I am sad that we need to have the... conversation."





## WHAT IS AT STAKE?

WHAT IS AT STAKE WHICH HAS AN EMOTIONAL IMPACT. SPEAK CALMLY AND QUIETLY.

### EXAMPLE

There is a great deal at stake. Several thoughts have come to me about your lack of awareness and the impact this has on the group when you talk over people, specifically Misha.

Perhaps there's little or nothing at stake for others, you've been here for over 10 years and Misha is new. But I'm not prepared to allow Misha or any other group member to be harmed. This situation is making people uncomfortable, so I believe we need to talk about the situation. Stakes are high.

## OWN YOUR PART

### LOOK INWARD.

Often the problem is not communicating clear expectations or insuring accountability.

#### EXAMPLE

"I have been trying to kindly redirect when this happens, and I did not want to upset you as there is so much value you add to our group; but I should have brought this to your attention earlier. I apologise for not doing that."



## INVITE THEIR FEEDBACK

THIS IS NOT AN ATTACK. THIS HAS BEEN A STATEMENT OF REALITY FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW WITH THE INTENT TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE. IT IS NOW TIME TO OPEN THE DISCUSSION AND HEAR THE OTHER PERSPECTIVE.

### EXAMPLE

"Please help me understand if you realise that you interrupt or cut people off?"

I want to understand what is happening from your perspective – especially with regard to Misha. Talk to me."



## NEXT STEPS...

**RESOLUTION: MAKE AN AGREEMENT AND DETERMINE HOW YOU WILL HOLD ONE ANOTHER ACCOUNTABLE.**

EXAMPLE

- What have we learned?
- Where are we now?
- Has anything been left unsaid that needs saying?
- How can we move forward from here, given our understanding?

"Great, I'm glad we had this conversation and you have agreed to work on your communication and if you interrupt someone and I give you the signal, you will take note and stop.

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## YOUR TURN – PAIRED SHARE

CAPTURING YOUR THOUGHTS IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

GROUP ACTIVITY:

- Go back to your situation where you need to have a difficult discussion.
- Using the worksheet provided, following each step, write down what YOU would say for each step.
- Share.